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Panel: Web-Based Education: Diffusion And Issues --The Next Stage

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ABSTRACT

Internet has changed the way education is being delivered. It is estimated that about 200 universities are offering some form of web-based learning. For traditional universities, the obvious question is not **when** but **how** to use the Internet effectively for educational purposes? How can they meet changing educational demands and manage change? What can we learn from early adopters? How can we institutionalize WBE? This panel will address many of these questions and will discuss several on going experiments and authors' experiences with WBE.

Key words: Web-Based Education, Diffusion, Issues in WBE, Digital Divide

As Web-based education (WBE) diffuses across boundaries, cultures and disciplines it is moving to the second stage of WBE (product) life cycle. In the first stage emphasis was on WBE definition with few early adopters like the NJIT, University of Phoenix, University of Maryland and University of Baltimore. However, as more and more countries and universities are joining the WBE, emphasis is shifting on efficiency and the effectiveness of WBE. Students want time and place independent education. This is happening all over the world. This is something "new" for everybody. The concept of an education without face-to-face interaction is unheard of. Many stakeholders are resisting this change. Evidence needs to be generated to assure skeptical stakeholders. Irrespective of doubts, WBE is here to stay. We are moving from static to dynamic education

NEXT STAGE OF WBE

New ideas require new approaches and new/retrained people. Research needs to be done, discussions need to take place and experiments need to be done to study the viability of WBE in the future. The second stage is much more competitive and changing Web's focus from "just" delivery to "efficient" and "quality" delivery. How can "quality" be incorporated in WBE? How will technology affect WBE in the future?

Researchers are still struggling with these and many other WBE issues. This panel will address some of the issues raised above and describe panelist's experiences with web-based teaching. Panel will discuss experiences of a university with WBE diffusion, another panelist will discuss the future of the technology of on-line learning and the third panelist will discuss "Sustainability of e-learning" expressed in terms of quality assurance and economic balance. As with any **new** subject, this panel will answer many questions and raise new ones.

PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

A.K. Aggarwal: Dr. Aggarwal is the Fulbright Scholar and Lockheed Martin Research Professor in the Merrick School of Business at the University of Baltimore. Dr. Aggarwal has published in many journals including, Computers and Operations Research; Decision Sciences; Information and Management; Production and Operation Management, Journal of EUC and

many national and international conferences. He is on the editorial board of several journals. His current research interests include web-based teaching, digital divide, global IT systems, model-based organizational systems and educational issues in MIS.

Salvatore Valenti: Salvatore Valenti is senior researcher at the DIIGA (Dept. of Information, Business and Automation Engineering) of the Università Politecnica delle Marche, Ancona.

He is member of the board of the PhD in "E-Learning: Methods and Techniques for Computer Assisted Education" held at the Università Politecnica delle Marche. He has been involved in several research projects funded by the Ministry of Instruction - University and Research, by the Italian National Research Council and by the European Union. He was involved in MODASPECTRA (MOtor Disability Assessment SPecialists' TRaining), a research and technology development project pertaining to the "Telematics Application Programme - Education and Training" sector of the 4th Framework Program for Research & Development of the European Union. The project was aimed at developing a Distance Learning based degree for post-graduate specialists on Motor Disability Assessment. Currently, his research interests are in the fields of Computer Based Assessment and Distance Learning. He is author of more than 70 papers published on books, journals and proceedings of international conferences, and has tutored a number of master thesis in the fields of Computer Based Assessment and Distance Learning.

Ron Legon: Since 1992, Ronald Legon has served as provost of the University of Baltimore (UB), the region's only upper-divisional and graduate university. Previously, he served in a variety of academic and administrative positions over a period of 25 years at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). Dr. Legon also teaches history and humanities courses at UB in both classroom and online formats. In recent years, he has led the campus effort to develop online instructional programs, including UB's nationally ranked webMBA program. He has received grants from the Sloan Foundation's Asynchronous Learning Networks initiative and the Bell Atlantic (Verizon) Foundation in furtherance of these efforts. In addition to his own online courses, he has developed a humanities website for Houghton Mifflin. Dr. Legon also serves as director of the e-Learning Center at UB, which was established in 2001 through the generosity of the MBNA Foundation.

Gary Hackbarth: is an Assistant Professor in the Logistic, Operations and Management Information Systems Department in College of Business at Iowa State University. His research interests include Strategic Management of the IS Function, eBusiness and International Relations, IT/IS Education, and IT/IS Security issues. He has published in Information and Management, Information Systems Management and the Financial Times. Dr. Hackbarth received a Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina, an M.B.A. from Golden Gate University and a B.S. from the United States Air Force Academy. He retired from the U.S. Navy with over 2600 flight hours and after many assignments related to training and operational readiness.